

444 North Capitol Street, N.W., #348

Washington, D.C. 20001

Ph. (202) 624-8443/Fax (202) 624-7888 for immediate release

**CALIFORNIA FRANCHISE TAX BOARD WINS
FTA TAXPAYER SERVICE AND EDUCATION AWARD**

(Washington, D. C., March 15, 2006) The Federation of Tax Administrators announced today that the California Franchise Tax Board has won the 2006 Leon Rothenberg Award for Taxpayer Service and Education for its ReadyReturn program.

This award is named for the long-time FTA Executive Director, and is made to state revenue departments for outstanding programs in taxpayer service and education.

Judges honored three programs: California in the category of Innovation; South Carolina for its one-stop registration system in the category of Burden Reduction; and Iowa for its e-filing strategy in the category of Most Impressive Result. California was singled out as having the overall "best in show" program.

Presentation of the award will take place at the FTA Annual Meeting on June 5 in Little Rock, Arkansas. California has also been invited to make a presentation on the program during the annual meeting.

The FTB's ReadyReturn program is a pilot program designed to make filing easier for the taxpayers who file the simplest returns. The FTB sends selected taxpayers a letter of invitation along with a completed tax return. These preselected taxpayers have previously filed using a single filing status, taking the standard deduction, have income derived only from wages (which are reported to the FTB by employers), have no dependents and claim no special credits. The invitation explains how to make any necessary changes to the return and what to do if the taxpayer doesn't want to participate. Taxpayers who choose to accept the ReadyReturn can file the paper return provided by the FTB or they can e-file it from the agency's website.

Twenty-two percent of those mailed a ReadyReturn filed it. Of those participating, 95 percent said they were satisfied with the program and would use it again.

Judges cited a number of aspects of the program, but were particularly pleased with its innovative approach. They commented, "This is just what we need" and "it's in the public's best interest." One added: "It's not that tough to do, technologically, but it's definitely something other states should know about."

The entries were judged by an independent panel consisting Delena Bratton of Fast Enterprises/Gentax, Clare Calaby of the Internal Revenue Service and Steve Roll of the BNA Tax Management, Inc.

The Federation of Tax Administrators is a nonprofit organization comprised of the tax and revenue departments of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City. Its mission is to improve the standards and methods of tax administration.